

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /067 W

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R 101947Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9564

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

UNCLAS PORT OF SPAIN 2063

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, TD

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER SETS DATE FOR ELECTIONS

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 1561

1. PRIME MINISTER ERIC WILLIAMS RETURNED TO THE PLACE WHERE HE MADE HIS START IN POLITICS, WOODFORD SQUARE IN DOWNTOWN PORT OF SPAIN, ON AUGUST 8 AND ANNOUNCED THAT THE LONG-AWAITED GENERAL ELECTIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE ON SEPTEMBER 13. AT THE RALLY, DR. WILLIAMS ALSO PRESENTED THE 36 CANDIDATES OF THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL MOVEMENT (PNM) AND OUTLINED THE PARTY'S ELECTION MANIFESTO.

2. ALL OF THE PRESENT MEMBERS OF THE CABINET HAVE BEEN RETAINED AS CANDIDATES, CONTRARY TO EXPECTATIONS THAT SOME WOULD BE DROPPED AS "PARTY MILLSTONES." FIVE MINISTERS WERE NOMINATED WITHOUT THE ENDORSEMENT OF DR. WILLIAMS, HOWEVER, AND MAY WELL BE DROPPED FROM THE NEW CABINET IF THE PNM IS SUCCESSFUL AT THE POLLS. ALL BUT TWO OF THE PRESENT BACKBENCHERS WHO WERE SWEEPED INTO OFFICE IN THE UNCONTESTED 1971 ELECTIONS WERE DROPPED IN FAVOR OF NEWCOMERS. DEFERRING TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEMAND

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FOR MORE WOMEN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AS CANDIDATES, THE PARTY

SELECTED FOUR WOMEN AND SEVERAL OTHER CANDIDATES IN THEIR TWENTIES AND EARLY THIRTIES.

3. THE BASIC BHEME OF THE PNM CAMPAIGN MANIFESTO, ACCORDING TO PRELIMINARY PRESS REPORTS, IS "YOU NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD." IT COMPARES THE DEMOCRATIC STABILITY WHICH EXISTS IN TRINIDAD WITH OTHER CARIBBEAN AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES AND STRESSES THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PARTY DURING ITS TWENTY-YEAR RULE OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO. IT PLEDGES TO CONTINUE THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM MADE POSSIBLE BY TRINIDAD'S OIL WEALTH AND TO CONTINUE TO "IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE" IN THE COUNTRY. THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTION OF THE MANIFESTO EMPHASIZES THE PNM'S COMMITMENT TO THE CARIBBEAN, SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING CUBA, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION BEING GIVEN TO CARIBBEAN INTERESTS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. IN SHORT, THE PNM HAS PROMISED MORE OF THE SAME. EMBASSY WILL PROVIDE A MORE DETAILED ANALYSIS AFTER THE FULL TEXT OF THE MANIFESTO IS AVAILABLE.

4. THE PNM ATTRACTED A LARGE AND ENUTHSISASTIC CROWN OF SUPPORTERS TO ITS WOODFORD SQUARE RALLY AND PRESENTED A UNIFIED AND CONFIDENT FACT TO THE PUBLIC. THE RECENT INTRA-PARTY IN-FIGHTING AND THE ILL WILL CAUSED BY DR. WILLIAMS' CAMPAIGN TO PURGE THE PARTY OF INCOMPETENTS, APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN PUT ASIDE IN THE INTERESTS OF PARTY UNITY AND WINNING THE ELECTION. THE NEW CANDIDATES PROPOSED BY THE PNM ARE NOT NOTABLY DIFFERENT OR BETTER KNOWN THAN THOSE THEY REPLACE BUT THEY DO GIVE THE PNM A MORE YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE AND INCLUDE AT LEAST A FEW WOMEN.
FAY

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